



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
LANSING

BRIAN CALLEY
LT. GOVERNOR

November 21, 2011

The Honorable Leon Panetta
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta,

Our country is in a truly unique time where we are examining any way we can to find every cost savings possible at both the Federal and State level. However, we don't want to risk elimination of programs that actually allow us to save money and provide a great benefit to the taxpayer.

We believe that the Air National Guard's C-27J program is one such program. The first two C-27Js, currently deployed in Afghanistan, are delivering the time-sensitive mission-critical supplies, troops, and equipment in support of the Army in an effective and cost efficient manner. The arrival of the C-27J has allowed both the CH-47s and the ground convoys to get some relief, providing a safer and more efficient means of transport for these critical deliveries.

In recent testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Air Force Chief of Staff General Norton Schwartz indicated that the Air Force is considering eliminating the purchase of the remaining C-27J aircraft. We believe that the elimination of additional C-27J aircraft will negatively impact the National Guard in our states and will weaken our national and homeland defense.

The National Guard, as the nation's first military responder, fills critical roles in both defense of the homeland, disaster response and recovery operations. The C-27J is an essential asset in our ability to fulfill all of these missions. Whether responding to regional wind and ice storms, hurricanes, or a large scale terrorist incident, the C-27J provides the National Guard with the ability to deliver personnel and emergency supplies, in an efficient and cost effective manner, to areas that would otherwise be inaccessible. We are counting on receiving this critical asset.

We appreciate that the Department of Defense has many difficult fiscal choices as the U.S. defense budget declines. We do not believe that eliminating a program like the C-27Js is the right decision. More C-27Js means faster responses to homeland security situations and natural disasters at a far more economical price than our larger airlifters, providing the taxpayers with higher cost efficiencies.

Thank you for your consideration of this important national security issue.

With our highest regards,

Rick Snyder
Governor

The Adjutant General
Michigan